

MEMORIAL

PROPOSED TO BE SUBMITTED TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL, IN REGARD TO CERTAIN REFORMS THEREIN SPECIFIED, AND MEANWHILE SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF LOWER CANADA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE AUTUMN MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AT QUEBEC, 1857.

An early reply, if objections are urged, is requested, to either of the Vice-Presidents of the College, in which the member resides.

To His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir Edmund Walker Head, Bart., one of Her Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council, Governor General of British North America, and Captain General and Governor in Chief of the Province of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Island of Prince Edward, Vice Admiral of the same, &c. &c. &c.

THE MEMORIAL OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF LOWER CANADA.

YOUR MEMORIALISTS HUMBLY REPRESENT:

That by the position of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, as representing the Medical profession in the Province of Lower Canada, it has been entrusted with interests of great vital importance, inasmuch as these interests are intimately connected with the welfare and happiness of the people:

That at a semi-annual Convocation of the Governors of the College, held at Quebec, in the month of October, 1856, a Resolution was unanimously adopted by that body, appointing a Committee for the District of Quebec, and another for that of Montreal, for the important purpose of "ascertaining the best means of extending the usefulness of the College to the Medical profession, and to the public in general":

That voluminous Reports thereon, were, at a subsequent meeting of the Board of Governors, submitted to its consideration, and approved:

That at the meeting of the Board of Governors, held at Quebec on the 13th October last, it was deemed necessary — founded on the Report of the two Committees specially assembled at Montreal on the preceding day — to modify the proceedings involved in the various subjects embodied in the Reports previously alluded to, and to nominate the two Vice-Presidents, with associative power, to carry into effect, through your Excellency's assistance and that of the Legislature, the Report of the College, embodying several important measures. With regard to that portion which comes more immediately within the action of the latter, your Memorialists would respectfully beg leave to draw your Excellency's attention to that part which has reference to the education and qualifications of Apothecaries, Chemists, and Druggists, with necessary provision for the inspection of Drugs, and stringent regulations for the sale of Poisons.

As it must appear to your Excellency that this subject involves interests of the highest importance to society, and in a great measure the safety and protection of life, we would earnestly recommend to your Excellency's consideration the Bill hereunto annexed, as taken in part from Sections of 27th Will. IV. Chap. 1, and entitled "Bill for the Regulation of the Studies of Apothecaries and the Sale of Poisons."

The other subjects included in the Report of the Board of Governors of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, come more immediately under your Excellency's prerogative, and among them one has reference to "the appointment of a Commission under whose directions should be enforced those hygienic rules or measures which have been recognized as serviceable, during the prevalence of epidemics, for securing the health of towns, &c."

On this portion of the Report your Memorialists would respectfully observe:

That as sanitary measures are incontestably of the highest importance to all countries, and particularly to this Province, where largely populated localities extend, in a direct line of communication, several hundred miles, thus bringing the inhabitants into constant and immediate intercourse with those but recently landed from on board of ships, — in which not unfrequently the most malignant and contagious diseases have prevailed during long voyages at sea, — we regret that the Provincial Act now in force, and commonly called the "Central Board of Health Act," should have been so framed as to prove extremely defective in its operations.

An extended experience of those calamitous and disastrous periods in which it has been enforced, has fully convinced your Memorialists that this Act is altogether inadequate for ensuring those prompt, comprehensive, and vigorous measures so urgently demanded on the approach and invasion of a great and destructive pestilence or malignant disease; and the better to provide to the population at large the benefit and protection of well-considered and efficient sanitary measures, with all the appliances that modern science can devise, we would most earnestly recommend to your Excellency that none but men of distinguished professional acquirements and practical experience should be entrusted with the execution of these measures,—the more especially as their minds will have been trained to the investigation and solution of abstruse subjects, and therefore emergently prepared to engage in all enquiries connected with public hygiene, with correct information and without prejudices.

As it is, furthermore, evident that it can only be in proportion to the extent to which these measures are scientifically and systematically carried out, that any substantial benefits can be secured, your Memorialists would with deference suggest, that that Act should receive such amendments as would enable Commissioners, appointed under its provisions, to take such measures of promptitude as will meet the exigencies of the case, for the prevention, or at least the mitigation, of these diseases, without reference to the approbation of their directions and regulations by any other executive authority. This is an exception which of late years has loudly called for public consideration, and particularly during the existence of a pestilential type of typhus, in seasons of scarcity and general destitution among the labouring classes, and the unexampled intensity and fatality of cholera.

Your Memorialists may be permitted to submit, that, as the College of Physicians and Surgeons should, in our opinion, present the aspect of a vigorous energetic corporation, whose deliberations have constantly in view, not only the honor, elevation, and usefulness of the Medical profession, but essentially the welfare and interest of the public, we deem it also one of our duties to awaken a stronger feeling than heretofore, in the public mind, in favor of our Provincial College, and to endeavor by every public means to create a closer bond with the Government of the country. We do so under no less an analogy than the College of Physicians of London, as well as those of Paris and other Continental countries, these learned bodies being affiliated to and associated with their respective governments in all matters connected with so important and vital a subject as the public health.

Your Memorialists having in view the rapidly increasing population of this part of the Province, and the inevitable future inadequacy of the Beauport Lunatic Asylum to meet the wants of a most unfortunately afflicted portion of the human family, would respectfully represent to your Excellency the necessity for the early erection of an asylum in the immediate neighborhood of the City of Montreal, on the unoccupied grounds which have been for so many years purchased for that purpose by the Provincial Government. Your Memorialists deem it their duty to bring this subject prominently before your Excellency, as one embodying the truest principles of philanthropy.

Another important subject has also engaged the attention of the Board of Governors, and, as it bears reference to "the appointment of medical men as Coroners, or Associates, especially in the large cities of the Province," your Memorialists would respectfully observe, in conclusion, that, as it has long been a matter of common assent in England, Ireland, the United States of America, and Upper Canada, strengthened by the opinion of the highest judicial authorities in these countries, that a knowledge of medical science, comprising medical jurisprudence, in the broadest acceptation of this term, is the most material qualification for the peculiar, and often difficult, complicated, and delicate functions which a coroner has to perform, they would earnestly solicit, that in the exercise of your Excellency's prerogative, appointments to an office of such unquestionable importance in its connection with the criminal jurisprudence of the country, should alone be conferred on persons of acknowledged distinguished acquirements in the medical profession, as being more peculiarly qualified to discharge effectually the duties of that office.

And as in duty bound, your Memorialists will ever pray.

A. VON IFFLAND, M.D., *A. A. C. I. 2442*

Vice-President for the District of Quebec.

A. HALL, M.D., L.R.C.S.E.,

Vice-President for the District of Montreal.

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Private Paper

Mr. H. H. H.

Colonel Jackson

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